

Welcome once again to the world's leading digital 360 magazine. This issue we have exclusive coverage of Section 8, Wolfenstein, IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey and Batman: Arkham Asylum. Plenty to get your teeth into there. And if you've come this far then I'm guessing you've checked out the new GamerZines website... and there's plenty more to get your teeth into there. As well as hosting all of our magazines the new site will be updated daily with news, previews, blogs and reviews, so if you haven't already then be sure to get it bookmarked. And do let me know what you think of the new site - it's currently in beta phase so your feedback really is important to us. Enjoy the issue...

360Zine FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of the new issue

MEET THE **TEAM**

Probably the best games writers on the planet



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360zine@gamerzines.com

Chris Schilling Chewing the fat id Software



David Scammell Hands-on with the

Don't miss! This month's top highlights











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Every game's just a click away!

Singularity

Tony Hawk: RIDE

StarWarsThe Clone Wars: Republic Heroes

> IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey

> > Section 8

Batman: Arkham Asylum Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2

Wolfenstein

Guitar Hero **Greatest Hits**

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ETIRAJUĐNIZ

Publisher: Activision Developer: Raven Software Heritage: Wolfenstein Link: http://katorga12.com ETA: Autumn







These timewaves occur intermittently, transporting Renko back to the Fifties. Is someone controlling this strange phenomenon?

"Your TMD can turn an onrushing soldier into a pile of crumbling bones"

FIRST LOOK

Singularity

PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell
us what you think
of Singularity

How to instantly become a Fifties throwback

What's the story?

Kitorga-12 is an island the Russians have covered up for ages. Why? Because they've been doing naughty science experiments there – the type which tend to go horribly wrong. Naturally, there's an almighty great explosion, just as pilot Nate Renko is flying over to investigate the unusual radiation emissions the island's been spewing out. It

turns out that it's not the first time such an event has occurred, and so Renko starts to flit between timelines – namely the 1950s and the present day – as the island starts to 'do a Lost'.

What do we know?

Cold War-era locations blended with sci-fi intrigue? Don't mind if we do, thanks. The more we hear about Singularity's plot, the more it grabs us by the nethers. If the game's writers can pull off the necessarily slow drip-feed of twists and revelations and give us plenty of decent dialogue to chew on, then we could be looking at a bit of a cult hit here. The time travelling idea is nothing new, but how it's exploited is more interesting – Renko's TMD (Time Manipulation Device) artificially ages certain items or regresses them. So you can rust a bridge so it'll collapse on enemy heads, or make a crusty old cassette r functional again. You can use it in combat too, turning a soldier into a pile of

player functional again. You can use it in combat too, turning a soldier into a pile of crumbling bones as he ages decades in seconds in front of your eyes.

When do we get more?

Fall 2009, or autumn as us Brits usually call it. 18th September is down as a tentative release date, and it's a game that would likely benefit from a demo, so don't be surprised if you see one of those prior to launch.

Anything else to declare?

Developer Raven says it's flattered by the BioShock comparisons, though there are enough differences between the two to make Singularity its own beast – especially the time-manipulation puzzles, which may be fairly simple but offer some welcome respite from the fast-paced and intense gunfights.





















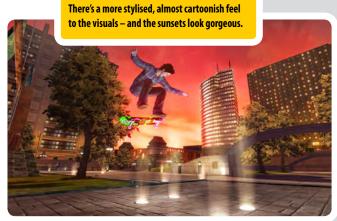


Publisher: Activision Developer: Robomodo Heritage: N/A Link: http://thride.com ETA: October



The game will have a gentle learning curve to ease players into using the new board peripheral.







"The peripheral itself is simple to control, with body position affecting direction and speed, and infrared sensors for grabs"

FIRST LOOK

Tony Hawk: RIDE

PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us
what you think of
Tony Hawk: RIDE

The Birdman returns with a brand new peripheral in tow

What's the story?

Tony Hawk has very popular videogame skateboarding series. Series starts to rest on laurels and has thunder stolen by EA's Skate. Series takes brief hiatus, returns with skateboard-shaped peripheral to try and win back throne.

What do we know?

We know that the immense popularity of Nintendo's Wii Fit Balance Board has probably made this a more viable proposition than ever. Anyone who has played the winter sports games in Wii Fit (or indeed Shaun White Snowboarding) will know that the idea works, and that a well-constructed peripheral-based boarding game stands every chance of revolutionising a genre that was perhaps just starting to look a little tired before Skate came along. Activision is hoping that its board will help it beat EA's effort, and early impressions suggest the peripheral itself is simple enough to control, with body position affecting direction and speed, and infrared sensors at the sides and ends of the board will handle grabs. Tricks require a bit of board-shaking – stepping on the back and wiggling your front foot, with directional twists as modifiers.

When do we get more?

Our release date diary says 20th November. Pricing will be all-important to RIDE's success – let's just hope that it's not quite as expensive as the rumoured £105 retail price for DJ Hero.

Anything else to declare?

The game has three difficulty modes – Casual features a thick yellow line for skaters to follow as they get accustomed to the boarding controls, while Confident features scenery reflectors and similar guidance to influence where you go. Finally, Hardcore mode opens things up, allowing you the freedom to skate wherever you want to.



















"THE GODFATHER OF FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS RETURNS"

XBOX 360 THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE



7тн AUGUST 2009











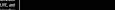
























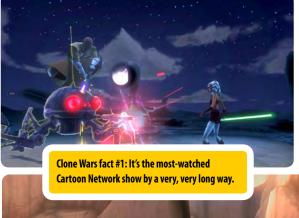




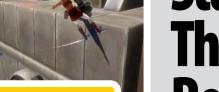




Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Krome Studios **Heritage:** Star Wars: The Force Unleashed Link: www.lucasarts.com/ games/theclonewars republicheroes **ETA:** September



Clone Wars fact #2: It's the number one brand for kids aged 6-12, and the top licensed toy line.



The Clone Wars: **Star Wars** Republic Heroes **The Clone Wars:**

Republic Heroes

"I am a Jedi, like my franchise before me..."

What's the story?

FIRST LOOK

A brand-new one, apparently; one which bridges the gap between Season One and Two of the TV series, which we're told is incredibly popular – we really should get around to watching it one of these days. Activision wants fans to 'really live the fantasy of the TV series', so expect lots of lightsaber-wielding, droid-slicing action with a few Force powers chucked in for good measure.

What do we know?

There are several characters to play as (Anakin, Obi Wan, Captain Rex et al) and it's very much a co-operative experience, as drop-in/drop-out play allows friends to join in at any time. If you're Billy No-mates though, then you'll have an Al companion by your side instead. One of the central concepts is 'droids as toys' - plunge your lightsaber into their bonces and you can use them to blast enemies and solve puzzles. There are mini-game challenges, too; competitive asides which see you try to outdo your compadre – for example, killing as many droids as you can in 90 seconds.

When do we get more?

Around September time, so we hear. The US gets it on the 15th, so hopefully it won't be much later than that.

Anything else to declare?

Like LEGO Star Wars, the game is built to encourage replay value. Once you've played through a mission as part of the story, you can return to the level with any characters you've unlocked and blast through it with said newcomer's own specific abilities.

"Plunge your lightsaber into a droid's head and you can use it to blast enemies and solve puzzles"



Clone Wars fact #3: It's the number one show on US TV for 2-11 year olds and the top boys and movie-related property. Wow.















PREVIEW FEEDBACK!

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AND YOU'RE JUST A MERE MORTAL.

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Metallica.guitarhero.com





































IL 2 STURMOVIK

Publisher: 505 Games Developer: 1C Company Heritage: IL-2 Sturmovik, Cryostasis Link: www.il2game.com ETA: 4th September









"The landscape has been recreated with stunning 3D models, ensuring that the game looks just as good at ground level as it does at 30,000 feet"

set to follow as DLC.

FIRST LOOK

IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey

PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell
us what you think
of IL-2 Sturmovik:
Birds of Prey

The classic PC series soars onto consoles

What's the story?

Here's something to spark back your interest in the WWII genre. Set between 1940 and 1945, Birds of Prey features six missions based on real WWII battles. Spanning a colossal 60 hours worth of play time, players will wage war in The Battle of Britain, before ending up in an epic dogfight atop the war-torn skies of Berlin.

What do we know?

IL-2's been doing the rounds on years for PC, where it received a cult following for being one of the best (yet most gruelling) flight combat simulators on the market. For the 360, developers 1C Company have attempted to open the game up to a larger audience, adding in three different levels of gameplay (Arcade, Realistic and Simulation) to cater for every type of player. Stick the game on Arcade and you'll be met with a Blazing Angels-like experience, as you soar over the fantastically modelled real-world locations while shooting the Luftwaffe out of the sky. Put it on Simulation and you'll be stripped of a HUD, forced to play from the spectacular cockpit view and made to fight for your place in the sky as dynamic damage rips the plane to shreds.

When do we get more?

The game swoops into Europe this September and we'll be bringing you the review in next month's issue. But if you want more on IL-2 in the meantime, be sure to check out Issue 30 of P3Zine (available from August 13th) for our hands-on preview.

Anything else to declare?

In other flight simulators, the closer you got to the ground, the worse it looks. Not so with IL-2. Though 1C are using satellite imagery so the game looks great at high altitudes, the landscape has also been recreated with stunning 3D models, ensuring that the game looks just as good at ground level as it does at 30,000 feet.



















SECTION 👸

Publisher: SouthPeak Games Developer: TimeGate Studios Heritage: F.E.A.R. Files Link: www.joinsection8.com ETA: September

PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
Section 8

> Section 8 continued

place across the game's sizeable maps, but which essentially acts as little more than a training mode for the multiplayer game. It's fair to say that comparisons with Left 4 Dead and Unreal Tournament III aren't too wide of the mark, though the solo game will involve a story, and will feature cut-scenes. Just don't expect to be playing it as long as the online game.

Its dedication to online play extends to SouthPeak providing specific servers for the 360 version – which is something that few other shooters do. Shadowrun was one, but otherwise examples of this are extremely rare. The game will support 32 players in the 360 version – compared with twice as many on PC – and offers bots to compete against should you not be able to locate any friends for a game.

"Section 8's dedication to online play extends to SouthPeak providing specific servers for the 360 version"

A class apart

There are default classes for those that want them, but Section 8 is ultimately a classless shooter – in the best possible way, you understand – with Engineer, Inflitrator and Recon et al merely the names of standard loadouts. These can be customised so you can pair a

































> Section 8 continued

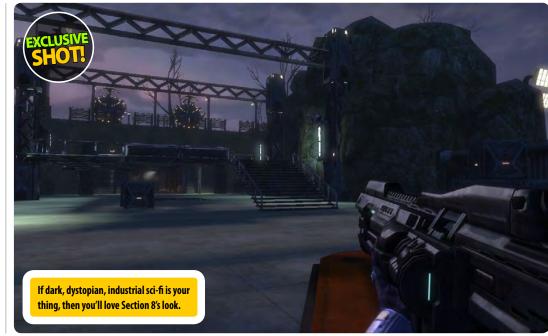
sniper rifle with an Assault-type weapon, while equipment packs can include knives, mortars and repair tools - the latter being used to heal yourselves, your team-mates and even to fix vehicles. You'll also get ten character points to spend on additional attributes, like armour-plating or a lock-on booster which allows you to fix your sights on an enemy for a longer time than the default three seconds. If the idea of a lock-on in an online shooter fills you with horror, then fret not, as these super-soldiers can take more than a few shots before they drop, and the lock-on is purely to compensate for the speed of movement the game allows. Not only can you sprint at breakneck pace when

"Your character also has a rocket boost, allowing him to leap to crazy heights"

Overdrive mode is activated, but your character also has a rocket boost, allowing him to leap to crazy heights, offering a neat escape route out of trouble, or a nice, quick way to reach higher ground to line up a better shot at your foes.

Dropping in

There's also another way of getting the drop on your opponents – literally. Section 8 extends a middle finger at those pesky spawn-campers by

















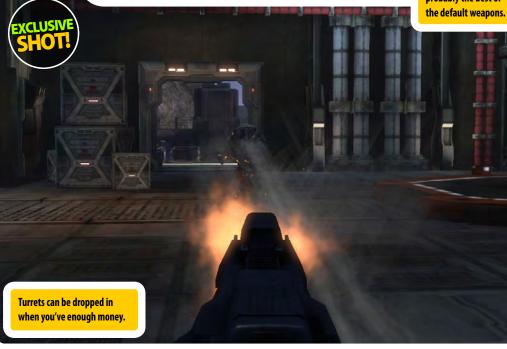






SECTION





> Section 8 continued

introducing a brand-new way of entering the battlefield: vertically. Yes, you'll drop right into the action, burning into the atmosphere like an asteroid in a spacesuit. Flames lick at the side of the screen as you rapidly descend, and you can either brake to ensure a softer landing – but making



"Section 8 has introduced a brandnew way of entering the battlefield: vertically"

yourself an easier target for those looking to the skies – or land at full tilt with a short recovery time (presumably to give your shattered kneecaps time to knit themselves back together). You can spawn anywhere you like, though obviously some places are better than others – you're given a warning if you're within artillery range of a base you don't yet own, though if you fancy a quick route to an enemy installation, then you can organise a group drop, with one or two likely to survive the

















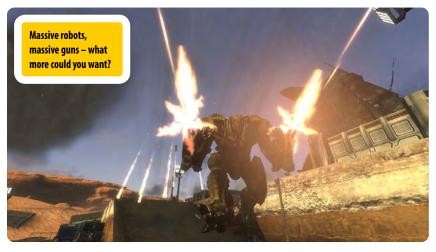


Our tip here? Don't

stay in one place for too long!







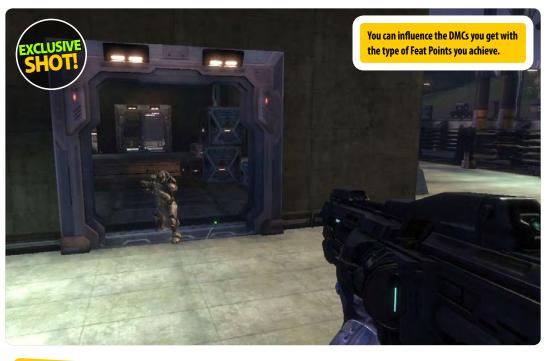
> Section 8 continued

onslaught and able to make a relatively swift capture.

If waiting for a base to transfer control from red (your opponent's colour, no matter which side you're on) to blue (your own side) isn't really your bag, then the Dynamic Combat Missions (DMCs for short) more likely

will be. Activated when you've achieved enough Feat Points (gained from performing certain tasks), they'll offer you Victory Points towards your team total for successfully transferring a bomb from one area of the map to another, or for escorting a VIP to safety while keeping him out of harm's way.

There are a total of ten maps, each coming in larger and smaller varieties



"There are a total of ten maps, each coming in larger and smaller varieties depending on the number of players"

depending on the number of players involved in the game. Each of them has its own idiosyncrasies – for example, Nuclear Dawn features a selection of concealed missile silos which have to be activated for Victory Points. Even the smaller ones are pretty huge, though they're easily crossed when you can run and jump like this.

Disappointments? It seems that destruction has been minimised to keep the pace up, but it's still a shame to see how weedy the explosions are, while the art style isn't particular inspiring, seemingly happy to settle for 'generic sci-fi'. It's a shame, as otherwise Section 8 has a few interesting ideas – if the netcode holds up, then this unusual first-person shooter could well find itself a cult fanbase.





















"This is the first





Publisher: Eidos **Developer:** Rocksteady Heritage: Urban Chaos: Riot Response Link: www.batman arkhamasylum.com ETA: 28th August

HANDS ON

videogame Batman you can believe in" Batman: **Arkham Asylum**

The Dark Knight returns, in what could be 2009's best tie-in

ark, brooding, enigmatic – Batman's never been the most traditional of heroes, and perhaps that's why videogames have strugaled to do him justice. As he escorts his charismatic, giggling arch-nemesis into Arkham Asylum, his monosyllabic responses make him

seem far from the star of the show. And, one swift and not-remotelyunexpected escape later and it's The Joker who's putting on the biggest performance, playing to the galleries and hamming it up beautifully, while the hero of the piece remains in the shadows, slowly and silently turning

We could tell you what the Bat-signal is used for, but then we'd have to kill you.

the tables on his aggressors. Which, of course, is exactly as it should be.

Rocksteady seems to be the first developer that has understood exactly what makes Batman tick. He's methodical, efficient and brutally effective. This is the first videogame Dark Knight you can truly believe in - there's a deliberate weight and heft to his movements, yet he can also glide through the air elegantly. His combat moves are ruthlessly economical, yet he can switch his focus from enemy to enemy, stringing moves together in a manner that's as close as Batman ever gets to showboating. He's a detective, a fighter and a ruthless hunter all rolled into one. And when you're controlling him, you'll feel like all those things. This is Batman, and it's unbelievably satisfying to have the chance to control the definitive digital representation of this complex character.

The narrative is as simple as they come, and it ushers in a game that's



perhaps more linear than some might expect – though that's an observation rather than a criticism. From the outset, Batman is convinced he's being led into a trap, simply thanks to the ease of Joker's capture – and he's right. No sooner is the grinning villain imprisoned than he's free, ably assisted by Harley Quinn and a series of masked or face-painted henchmen. Joker becomes the game's puppet

























> Arkham Asylum continued

master, locking doors and forcing Batman down prescribed routes. Yet that's not to say exploration doesn't play a big part, as some of you may be surprised to learn that the game almost feels like a platformer in places. Certain rooms can be crossed in several different ways, with grates, gantries and gargoyles offering alternative ways around, while others are almost self-contained puzzles as you try to find a route across – one cavernous interior you come across has its lower half flooded with poison gas.

You'll also be asked to play detective – certain sections revealing invisible traces of tobacco or alcohol which Batman needs to follow to locate certain characters. It's little more than a breadcrumb trail – a way of funnelling you down a certain path or preventing you getting lost – but it makes a pleasant change from locked doors or security barriers, and the Bat-vision looks pretty cool, too.

And all the way, you'll find The Joker pulling the strings. He's a constant presence, leering from monitor screens or jabbering away over loudspeakers, often hinting at encounters to come or























> Arkham Asylum continued

springing surprises on you. Aside from the boss encounters – which are fairly traditional in the sense that there's essentially a series of patterns to learn and exploit. Combat encounters come in two types. The first sees you tackling

unarmed enemies with fists and feet. Though initially there's just one attack button, it's all about timing and positioning, as you swiftly slide from one enemy to the next, different moves being brought out on a context-sensitive basis. Then a counter button is introduced, followed by a

If guards show up as red, they're armed and dangerous.



stun punch for hardier foes, and others which require you to attack from the rear. It's a gloriously fluid system where every blow really connects well particularly during stylish finishers where your last punch or kick gets the slo-mo close-up treatment. Stringing together a 20-hit combo before reverse-kicking a goon into a wall has to be one of our most satisfying gaming moments this year. Then there are armed guards to deal with too, which require a more stealthy approach - Bats can't soak up too many bullets, so you'll need to find a more covert route to take out these foes. In these

rooms you'll find gargoyles to be swung between and floor grates to crawl under, allowing you to emerge from beneath for a silent takedown.

There's much more to Arkham Asylum than we've space to discuss here, including some terrific unlockables and a series of puzzles to solve as an aside from the main story. And thanks to pesky embargoes, we're not allowed to mention a couple of personal highlights - one or two imaginative sequences which really put the 'dark' in the Dark Knight. Suffice it to say that you should start to get very excited indeed.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Batman: Arkham Asylum

























Publisher: Activision Developer: Vicarious Visions **Heritage:** Marvel Ultimate Alliance, Spider-Man 3 Link: http://marvel ultimatealliance marvel com

ETA: Autumn

FIRST LOOK

Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2

Whose side are YOU on?

ecurity versus Liberty is just one of many battles fought in this seguel to 2006's Marvel Ultimate Alliance. After a huge fight between heroes and villains causes an explosion which kills 600 people, the Government passes legislation which requires superhumans to adhere to the law or presumably be censured for their actions. So even on the heroes' side, there are two very different factions – those who are pro-registration (Captain Fantastic and Iron Man) and those

against (Captain America and Nick Cage). Whichever side you choose, you'll get your pick of the rest of the superheroes, though the four aforementioned characters stick to the same side throughout.

It's an interesting conceit, though how much difference it actually makes to the way the game plays is open to debate – we look forward to seeing if it throws up any thorny moral dilemmas, though there's little evidence of that so far. The choice you make will affect your path through the game theoretically making for decent replay value, if little else. Nope, while it could have interesting repercussions from a story standpoint, the gameplay essentially remains the same - beat up lots and lots of enemies with your superhero chums in tow.

Not that that will be a problem for fans of the fairly popular first game, and Vicarious Visions has been working hard on the sequel to make sure this From the most famous Marvel heroes to lesser lights, there's a comic book hero



















Though the Al won't leave all the work to you, you'll have to step in and

do your fair share of baddie-bashing.





> Marvel: UA 2 continued

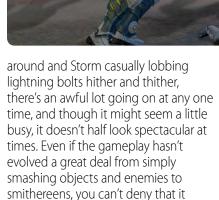
offers plenty in the way of fan service, even if there's not that much in the way of innovation.

24 characters are promised straight out of the box - including newcomers like Deadpool, Venom and Juggernaut - and you'll progress towards Castle Doom in groups of five, combining your powers with those of your cohorts to get through those seemingly unending hordes of henchmen.

What we've seen so far looks a little prettier than the first game – it's always nice to see outdoor locations in the daytime as a respite from the assortment of labs and lairs superhero games are so fond of – even if

seguel is perhaps stretching its importance. The key to not dying is basically teamwork – you'll be able to join forces with an Al or playercontrolled team-mate to execute which can be targeted towards large example, we witnessed Hulk flinging Wolverine claws-first into a chopper, while Iron Man and Venom's 'collect and destroy' move utilised the latter's sinuous tendrils to grab a host of enemies, with the former essentially getting a series of free shots to blast them into atoms. With The Human Torch simultaneously hurling fireballs





And let's face it, there's a ready-made audience for this kind of stuff - the kind of fanboy that's going to want to see Hulk pound people into the pavement,

does all that with some flair.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what vou think of Marvel: Ultimate or to whack goons with Captain America's shield. And Ultimate Alliance 2 is the game that lets you live out your superhero fantasies from the comfort of your own armchair.



Alliance 2





















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ANAZI BUSINESS

We're excitedly anticipating the return of a classic series as Raven's new Wolfenstein nears release. We spoke to the game's Creative Director **Eric Biessman**, and **Steve Nix** of id Software to find out what's in store





Eric Biessman (left) and Steve Nix (right) – teaming up to make Wolfenstein relevant to a 21st Century audience.



Wolfenstein is a name with a huge gaming legacy –is it daunting to create a new title in such a well-known franchise? Does that add extra pressure on you for the development process?

EB: I'd say 'daunting' is a great way to describe it. A lot of people, myself included, consider Wolf 3D to be the grandfather of the first-person shooter, as it opened a lot of doors for people to try out a new game and it paved the road for many companies to be born and many cool games to be made. That was followed up with Return to Castle Wolfenstein, which introduced the team-based, class structured multiplayer that is prevalent in the games of today. Coming into the development of Wolfenstein we made a primary goal for the game to be true to the franchise while also creating a new, compelling gameplay addition, and that's how the Veil came into being.

It's been eight years since the release of Return to Castle Wolfenstein. Why is it now the right time to release a sequel?

SN: We really don't have a set schedule for when games in each of our core franchises should be released. We do have a great deal of passion for Wolfenstein though, and we were really excited that Raven – who id has partnered with repeatedly over the years – was available and enthusiastic about developing the next chapter in the series. The team there has brought a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm to the development, while also showing a great deal of appreciation for what it is that makes a game feel like a part of the Wolfenstein universe.

Keeping the name as simply Wolfenstein implies that this is something of a series reboot. Would you agree with that?























> Interview continued

EB: I would say this is an evolution of franchise as we're carrying the theme, style and characters of the game forward in the universe instead of

starting them from scratch. We went and instantly recognisable to fans. It also grabs the attention of people who have never played a Wolf game.

with the name 'Wolfenstein' for several reasons. First off, it is a powerful name

Secondly, we wanted the game to stand out on its own so we felt it deserved its own title. We knew we wanted to steer clear from just numbering the game, especially since the previous games steered away from that convention. The idea is that the game is its own adventure. It has its own story, its own gameplay and it needed to stand out on its own from the title as well.

What are the main ways that you feel this improves on Return to **Castle Wolfenstein?**

EB: Wolfenstein has really pushed more into a narrative story experience. You get to see more personality, both from the characters in the game and from the setting itself. We've given B.J.

a voice, and he has interesting characters that he interacts with throughout the game. On top of that, we've based the core gameplay of Wolfenstein on the previous games.

We focused on action-packed, explosive combat as the key to the game. B.J. has a powerful arsenal at his disposal as he takes out the dark science and strange occult enemies the Nazis are creating, but this time we've pushed it a bit further. We've added the Veil, which is a second dimension that rests upon reality. In game terms, it allows the player to have a window into the weird occult things the Nazis are creating and allows the player to use it against the Nazis. It really builds on the established combat and allows the







> Interview continued

player to open up new ways of playing the game.

We also have other noteworthy additions, including a fully stocked and kitted out economy system. In previous games, gold and treasure were collectibles you could find but they didn't add any benefit to the gameplay. This time around, the gold can be spent at the Black Market to buy upgrades for every single weapon and Veil power you can acquire. It allows players to really power up their favourite things and drive the game in a direction that they want it to go.

The FPS genre is quite a crowded one. What makes Wolfenstein stand out from other modern first-person shooters?

EB: The universe and gameplay of Wolfenstein has always made the games stand out from other modern first-person shooters. It's set in World War II, but it isn't a World War II game per se... Comparing Wolfenstein to another WWII shooter is like comparing Raiders of the Lost Ark to Saving Private Ryan. You play as a heroic soldier, B.J. Blazkowicz, sent in when the chips are down and the Nazis are up to strange things. Along the way, you gain access to powerful sci-fi weapons and the power of the Veil. You'll meet (and defeat) the strange and twisted experiments and soldiers of the SS Paranormal, so you'll never know what to expect throughout the game!

Finally, if you were showing off the

game to someone who'd never played a Wolfenstein title before, what would you show them to get them excited about

EB: I'd just let them sit down at the beginning of the game and play. They'd instantly be introduced to the character and setting of the world, as well as the solid combat and powerful weapons that the game offers. Then, after they understand the high energy, action core of the game, I'd throw them into the Veil, hand them the particle cannon –a really awesome energy weapon from a bit later in the game that just rips through enemies – and let them wreak havoc upon the Nazi menace! Good stuff.

Look out for the full review of Wolfenstein in a forthcoming issue of 360Zine



Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Raven Software Heritage: Quake 4, X-Men Origins: Wolverine Link: www.wolfenstein. com/home ETA: 14th August































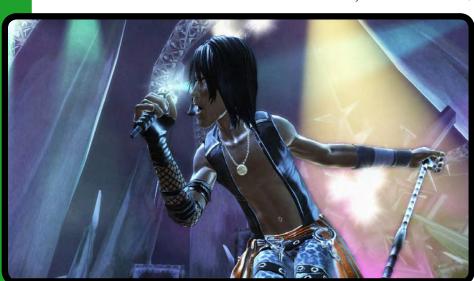
Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Beenox Studios **Heritage:** Bee Movie Game, Monsters vs. Aliens **Link:** http://greatesthits. quitarhero.com/v1/index_ en UK.html **OUT NOW**

Guitar Hero: Greatest Hits

Second verse, same as the first...

t was always going to happen. As soon as Guitar Hero: World Tour opened the series up to other instruments, people were going to demand the old songs with added drums, bass and vocals. And so Greatest Hits brings almost 50 of them together on the one disc. If your career as a virtual Guitar Hero started and ended with

World Tour and you've never played any of the previous games, this is almost certainly a worthwhile buy, unless you happen to hate the tracklist with a passion (in which case, why on Earth are you reading this review?). But by the same token, following so hard on the heels of GH: Metallica, and with number 5 and Band Hero just around the corner,



"Greatest Hits brings together almost 50 old songs on the one disc"

it's difficult to escape the fact that there's a voice swirling around your brain whispering 'overkill'. Nothing guite evaporates goodwill towards a franchise quite so much as sequelitis, after all.

More egregiously, there's no attempt to extend compatibility with World Tour or Metallica – this is a standalone package which doesn't benefit from the possibilities of downloadable content. Unless Activision decides to re-release some other golden oldies as DLC locked to this particular release – but why would it do that, when it can just release Guitar Hero: Greatest Hits 2 six months down the line? Perhaps if the publisher had at least given World Tour owners the chance to download these tracks separately, we wouldn't feel quite so uneasy about the enterprise. But as it stands, if you fancy replaying a few old favourites as a full band, you're going to have to stump up for the whole lot.

Brushing our cynicism aside for a while, we're happier to report that this certainly isn't a compilation which has been slapped together with the



ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

What we'd change about Greatest Hits





Disc content 👩





Key change

Harmonix just about nailed the guitar tracks for the first two games. So why fix what wasn't broken? Beenox has re-adjusted the maps, perhaps to offer a new challenge to returning players, but it's an unnecessary alteration. Drumming is better, but on occasion you'll still come across an odd rhythm.









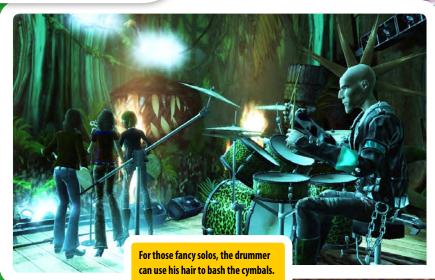














Slayer's Raining Blood is one of the game's toughest tracks.





> GH: Greatest Hits cont.

barest of thought. For starters, the tracks are all masters, rather than the admittedly decent 'as made famous by' covers which dominated the first two games. Secondly, the vastly improved structure of the later games is a definite boon, making all the songs instantly accessible from the Quick Play menu rather than forcing players to unlock their faves. The Career mode itself is based on stars once more, with easy targets meaning you'll rarely have to play through a song you dislike. And the rest of the usual elements are all present and correct – it's not a stripped-down Guitar Hero release by any means, despite our misgivings about the lack of cross-compatibility.

Activision's internal studio Beenox has been busy elsewhere too, providing a series of interesting gig locations based on the wonders of the world the more outlandish backdrops seem fitting for the series' cartoonish excesses, and it's something a little different to

"Quite a few of the tracks are not ideally suited to the full band experience"

see the camera pan past a gigantic snapping plant on its way to the stage.

Alas, the developer has also been fiddling with the note charts, and while in one sense it's praiseworthy that it hasn't just relied on the originals, there are more than a few questionable alterations, especially on Medium and Hard difficulties. Quite a few of the tracks suffer from being originally chosen because they suited to the guitar and are not ideal for the full band experience. And ones which should benefit – we were particularly looking forward to drumming along to No One Knows – have been neutered by wonky note maps.

But ultimately, it's more Guitar Hero, and if you're a fan of the series then you'll find plenty to love here. Though we'd rather point newcomers in the direction of World Tour or Metallica, it's an effective nostalgia trip for those who remember the heady days of 2005 with that tiny plastic SG.



Too much of a good thing? Perhaps, but this is still a rockin' good time



It's still Guitar Hero



Note charts aren't perfect



No cross-compatibility























Publisher: Electronic Arts **Developer:** DICE Heritage: Battlefield: Bad Company, Mirror's Edge Link: www.battlefield 1943.com **OUT NOW**

Battlefield 1943

Island in the sun

omewhat inappropriately for a game dealing with a real-life conflict, there's something giddily daft about Battlefield 1943 - the kind of fun which war shouldn't really be. War is hell! It's not fun! Except here it is. For all the sturm und drang of Killzone 2, we might just have the best multiplayer shooter of the year here – at least until the twin Panzers of Halo 3 ODST and Modern Warfare 2 rumble into view.

DICE has realised that complexity is not the key to a fun online experience, and so we have a very much stripped-

down kind of Battlefield – three classes. three stages (though it'll likely be four by the time you read this) and not a whole lot else to worry about, aside from making sure you hold enough capture points to win the game.

Yet far from being overly simplistic, what some elitists will invariably see as 'dumbing down' is the game's trump card. Maps are just perfectly sized – large enough so that no matter how many players, it never feels too densely packed, yet small enough so that you're never too far from the action (and there



are jeeps, tanks and planes if you want to cross large distances a little guicker).

There's just constantly something to catch your eye – what appears to be a carelessly abandoned capture point, a jeep that's been left at the edge of a cliff, or an unoccupied bunker from where you can call in an air raid, before piloting a bomber and unleashing its payload. You might gun down an enemy and pick up his kit, deciding you fancy a bit of mid-range combat instead of shooting from the hip, or spot an anti-aircraft emplacement ideal for taking down those pesky enemy fighters. You might even take to the skies yourself, swooping down to rake gunfire at fleeing foes. Or sit on the aircraft carrier, sniper rifle in hand and just pick off any enemies foolhardy enough to wander within range.

Yet those players will invariably get bored of that and start mucking in with a bit of close-range rat-a-tat machine gun combat. Anyone who's played Bad Company will know just how brilliant a DICE-crafted gun can sound. But while >



LAND, SEA AND AIR

Fighting a war on all fronts





Tanks very much





Jeep thrills

Jeeps are a quick way to get from one place to another in a hurry, though they can't take much punishment before they explode into flames. It's often best to take a friend along for the ride, allowing him to pick off enemies along the way while you concentrate on driving - or vice versa.























The three basic classes

essentially boil down

to whether you prefer

short-, medium-, or

long-range combat.





Rockets can shatter brickwork, though sometimes it's more fun to plough through houses in a tank.

> Battlefield 1943 cont.

it makes all the right noises, it's the game's looks which really impress. There's a rare charm to an online shooter which has such a vivid blue in its skies, and with golden beaches and gorgeous green seas, it's almost a pity to tear up the place. It has the added bonus of making enemies a little more distinct you'll never be left baffled as to where the bullet or rocket that killed you came from. Sometimes you'll just gaze out across the horizon and see smoke plumes rising from vivid orange flames, against what should be an idyllic Pacific backdrop – just a second or so before a sniper nails you right between the eyes...

"With golden beaches and gorgeous green seas, it's almost a pity to tear up the place"

No-one on your team will resent your lack of kills if you're the master at sneakily capturing bases. Perhaps it's the delightful setting, the way the game positively encourages gloriously silly experimentation, or simply that it feels like a cartoonish, slightly surreal version of war rather than the grimly realistic alternative more commonly found in other, lesser FPSes, but this is one of the most relaxed and purely enjoyable online shooters we've ever played.

What's perhaps most impressive is that no matter how chaotic the action gets, you're never at a loss as to what's going on. More than any other recent online shooter we can recall, there's a sense that you're entirely in control of your own destiny, and that you always feel like a useful cog in the war machine.























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Publisher: Activision
Developer: Luxoflux
Heritage: True Crime:
Streets of LA, Kung Fu Panda
Link: www.transformers
game.com

OUT NOW

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen

"Revenge of the Fallen isn't bad as film tie-ins go, but as a game it's as bland as cardboard"

Superior sequel, but still sub-Prime

It's always a good idea at the concept stage, but for some reason never quite works as a videogame – or as a film, if you're Michael Bay. In fairness, there's some fairly spectacular action in the two recent Transformers films, but they're both hamstrung by weird, baffling narratives, and unnecessary human interludes. Just stick Optimus Prime and Megatron in a big city and let's see them go at it like Godzilla and Mothra. That's

what we've paid our seven pounds for.

But we digress, and that's because starting an intro to one of the most stultifyingly average games you've ever played is never an altogether easy task. It's like writing about porridge – and not even that Oatso Simple stuff. Revenge of the Fallen isn't bad as film tie-ins go, but as a game it's as bland as cardboard.

A game should never aspire to mediocrity, but that's all Luxoflux had to achieve to best Revenge's awful predecessor. Initial impressions aren't bad – the Transformers themselves are large, detailed, nicely animated, and while the opening stage can't think of a better way to introduce you to the controls than a VR combat simulation, everything seems solid and responsive

As Bumblebee, you can change into your car form simply by holding down the right trigger – an idea which offers a guicker way around the map, as well as opening up a few special combat moves, like leaping into a kind of ground-pound move as you transform back into a robot. Otherwise, everything's probably as you'd expect. Combat is a mix of melée attacks and long-range weapon firing, with each robot having a secondary weapon and a special ability – ranging from a stun attack to a healing move. Naturally, you can't use these all the time, but have to wait for them to charge – the same goes for overuse of weapons, with a cooldown period needed if your finger is glued to the trigger.

Into battle then, and when more than one enemy shows up, things start to degenerate into a chaotic mess of

ROBOTS IN DISGUISE

When metal meets metal





Serve and protect

Overdrive

Jump around

Many of the best attacks involve leaping from the vehicle mode and transforming into your robot state in mid-air, often allowing you to bring down a forceful blow onto your opponent, or to thump into the ground and send out a shockwave to damage enemies just out of immediate reach.

























> Transformers continued

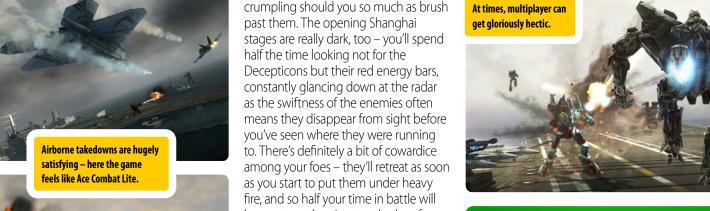
gunfire, explosions and objects crumpling should you so much as brush past them. The opening Shanghai stages are really dark, too – you'll spend half the time looking not for the Deceptions but their red energy bars, constantly glancing down at the radar as the swiftness of the enemies often you've seen where they were running to. There's definitely a bit of cowardice as you start to put them under heavy fire, and so half your time in battle will be spent not beating ten shades of motor oil out of metal behemoths, but scouring the boxy cities looking for them.

At the end of the mission you'll be rated on your performance - time taken, accuracy, secrets found, that sort of thing – and offered the chance to upgrade your Transformer of choice. You can play as the Decepticons if you think Optimus is a bit of a goody two-shoes,

"Playing as the Decepticons makes for a nice twist"

which is a nice twist, but it doesn't make a lot of difference to the gameplay.

At least you can't accuse the multiplayer of being quite so samey. Because each Transformer has very distinct abilities, ideas which are barely touched upon in the single-player game suddenly become important strategies in the multiplayer. It can occasionally degenerate into standoffs where it's whoever has the most powerful weapon that doesn't run out of juice first is the winner, but fun times are definitely there to be had.





Dull level design

Clearly rushed, but with some good ideas - and multiplayer's a blast



























Publisher: EA Sports **Developer:** EA Canada **Heritage:** Facebreaker, FIFA 09, NHI 09 Link: http://fightnight. easports.com/home.action **OUT NOW**

Fight Night Round 4

Seconds out... Round 4

ast time it was about the experience; this time, it's all about the science. Not for nothing does Round 4 offer a more strategic, pulledback camera angle to frame the action, nor is it an accident that the three bars - Stamina, Health and Damage - are always within view. Round 3 was more like a digital recreation of what it's like to be punched, but Round 4 is absolutely, unequivocally a simulation of a sport. Sorry, the simulation of a sport. That's not mere hyperbole, either. Despite a distinct lack of competition, EA's game has deservedly ruled the videogame

boxing ring for some time now, yet it would have been easy for EA Canada to rest on its laurels, and simply offer a half-hearted incremental update with a few new boxers, simply because there's little it really has to beat. Yet it's actually guite a different beast to its predecessor.

The first thing you'll notice is how fast and smooth it all is. Initially you'll be convinced it's too quick, as punches arrive in flurries, giving you precious time to react to them – especially at the lower weights. Yet that's all part of the science, as boxing is a swifter sport than some give it credit for, and while we've

be convinced

"At first, you'll it's too quick"



Which brings us onto perhaps the game's most controversial decision: The Total Punch Control system. Completely ignoring button-based punching – the face buttons are used for clinches. pushes and illegal blows – it requires guarter- and half-circle motions with the Right stick to execute hooks and uppercuts. A quick diagonal flick sends out your boxer's jab, and there's an button-activated signature punch for each fighter. Getting one of these to land requires immaculate timing, but it's usually worth a knockdown – or at the very least could leave your rival stunned.

If you preferred the button controls of the earlier games, then your luck might well be in soon, with EA promising a patch to add them back in. But while the motions required for the more aggressive punches can seem a little exacting – and unnecessarily so,



PUNCH-OUT!!

The techniques to outboxing your opponent



Dodge

Block

Counter







You'll need to spend some time bobbing and weaving to avoid the onslaught of punches, especially if you're facing an opponent with an aggressive, pressing style. If they keep swinging and missing, their stamina meter will start to deplete, slowing them down.



























There's an impressive roster of over 40 fighters past and present – it's nice to be able to recreate some of boxing's most famous bouts.

Pacquiao's speed and punching power make him a good starter fighter, though for our money Calzaghe's an even more solid pick.

> Fight Night Round 4 cont.

as it's not as if there are that many different types – once you've spent some time training or in the game's extensive tutorials, they soon become much more enjoyable. It's a far more tactile and realistic way to attack. You'll have to weigh up whether it's worth going for a powerful uppercut, given that the time it takes to execute the move could leave you in danger of a counter-attack from your opponent.

There's a very real feeling of weight to everything you do in the ring – there's no clipping here as huge punches connect and bodies shake the ropes and thud against the canvas. The camera wobble when you're staggered almost makes the player feel woozy, never mind the fighter you're controlling. You'll be desperately pawing at your opponent as you try to cling onto him for a few desperate seconds as you recover, or you'll stagger backwards and desperately put

"The camera wobble when you're staggered almost makes you feel woozy yourself"

your gloves in front of your face in a frantic attempt to fend off further blows – which always come.

Though its Legacy mode is a bit of a let down and its online tournaments seemingly full of people who spam body punches, with friends or against the worryingly adaptable Al opponents, Round 4 offers a fight experience of unparalleled realism. It's a beautifully crafted piece of software that's destined to be ignored when Game of the Year awards come around, but it won't be soon forgotten by fight fans.

























Burn the midnight oil

Why you'd be a FUEL to ignore Codemasters' open-world racer



Chris Schilling Chris is the proud owner of all three current-gen home consoles. Every issue Chris will talk about whatever 360-related issue is currently occupying his mind.

fter a string of engine-revving hits, Codemasters' latest foray into the racing genre has hit the skids somewhat, with FUEL turning in much lower Metacritic ratings than the celebrated DiRT and GRID, and failing to really wow petrolheads in the same way. It's a great pity, as for my money it's one of the most interesting and ambitious racers for years, and it's one I've spent a good deal of time with since writing my review for Issue 28 of P3Zine – though I'm now firmly immersed in the 360 version.

Maybe I'm a little more predisposed to the way FUEL does things because I'm one of few people I know who feel the racing genre has gotten rather stale over recent years. I've never been the biggest fan of sim racers, admiring the likes of Gran Turismo from afar, and enjoying but a fleeting dabble with Forza, but they're not the only way the genre has stagnated. Recent racers have struggled to make much of an impact – just witness the sales of Project Gotham Racing 4 or the astoundingly underrated Sega Rally (although the latter was victim of one of the worst cases of release date scheduling I've ever seen, being launched in the same week as Halo 3 and FIFA 08). Perhaps that can be put down to the genre being dominated

"Stick on your favourite tunes and cruise around this magnificent world"

by two or three big names, but when even Need for Speed has to come in for a serious tuning up, you know the genre's beginning to stagnate. That's certainly the opinion of Bizarre Creations, whose Blur is promising to bring some much-needed excitement to the genre later this year.

FUEL for the fire

Perhaps part of FUEL's commercial and critical malaise is down to people failing to really appreciate its innovations, or more likely misunderstanding exactly what the game is about. FUEL is about as far from Motorstorm as two off-road racers are likely to be, but it seemed most gamers expected a free-roaming version of Sony's multiplayer corker.

FUEL undoubtedly has its online issues, and its loading times are a real nuisance, but when you take the time to explore its epic landscapes, it suddenly springs to glorious life -

perversely, given how desolate the world is. Turn the music down, stick on your favourite chill-out tunes and cruise around this magnificent world, and you're guaranteed to appreciate what Asobo Studio has accomplished here. Ignore the events for a while and spend your time chasing down liveries, vista points and those Doppler Trucks, and you'll find the hours just fly by. You'll get a greater feel for the handling, for exactly where you're best sticking to roads or taking shortcuts, and you'll start to cement your own favourite areas in your mind – current pick: Drownington Cove. And if you grit your teeth and cope with the loading times – or, better still, install it to your hard drive to minimise delays – then the events will start to worm their way into your heart, particularly those taking place in extreme weather conditions. Reaching the apex of a hill to see a orange-red glow of a nearby bush fire? Gorgeous.

It's the perfect rainy Sunday afternoon game, and is equally ideal for a relaxing evening. Now all we need is that patch, so we can enjoy the online as it was intended to be!

Online issues have prevented FUEL from being the off-road Test **Drive Unlimited its devs** clearly wanted it to be.





















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Telephone: 0117 986 6550

Staff writers: Chris Schilling, David Scammell

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